

Written

3/18/13 PH



SIERRA
CLUB
FOUNDED 1892

Connecticut Chapter
645 Farmington Ave.
Hartford, Connecticut 06105
www.connecticut.sierraclub.org
Martin Mador, Legislative Chair

Government Administration and Elections Committee
March 18, 2013

Testimony In Favor of
SB1119 AAC The Citizens' Election Fund

I am Martin Mador, 130 Highland Ave., Hamden, CT 06518. I am the volunteer Legislative Chair and Political Chair for the Connecticut Chapter of the Sierra Club. I hold a Masters of Environmental Management degree from the Yale School of Forestry and Environmental Studies.

I speak here both as a Public Interest Advocate, and as a campaign treasurer for the past 7 elections, starting in 2000.

We all understand the corrosive effects of money on politics. The size of a campaign war chest reflects only the wealth of campaign donors. It has no correlation with the popularity of a candidate or the validity of his ideas, unless the size of individual donations is capped and donations from non-individuals are banned.

Governance in the US is based on the equal weight of one's vote. That principle does not survive if elections are governed, not by ideas, but by money.

But the corrosion does not stop with politics. The point of campaign money is to change the course of legislation. Connecticut's first election based on public funding was in November, 2008. Just a few months later, as the 2009 legislative season was starting, I heard from many legislators that public funding had already changed the atmosphere. Legislators were already feeling that they had been freed from dependence on fundraising, and were now free(r) to focus on the merits of the issues before them. Lobbyists could no longer funnel funds from special interests, so they too had to rely on the merits of their message for their clients. I was told that Public Interest Advocates, such as myself representing the Sierra Club, were getting more traction on their issues. Our ability to contribute outsized sums to campaigns was no longer the handicap it had been. Public funding had become an antiseptic, cleansing the political and legislative process.

The small amount we spend on the Citizen's Election Fund buys us clean government. It provides an extraordinary return on a relatively small investment. SB1119 will provide the assurance that the program will continue. On behalf of the people of the state, please support it.